Researcher Sees Lung Cancer Drug In Next Five Years

By Stuart Auerbach

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WASHINGTON — Within five years, scientists at the National Cancer Institute expect to find a chemical cure for lung cancer, using the same type of drug treatment that has cut the death rate from Leukemia and Hodgkin's disease.

At a press conference Thursday, the scientists reported that drugs have effected "complete remissions (no signs of illness for extended periods" in six types of cancers. These include leukemia and Hodgkin's disease, which had been considered fatal.

The tumors involved in these six cancers, Dr. C. Gordon Zubrod reported, were found to be "fast-growing." They double in number within days or weeks.

Zubrod, the chief of the cancer institute's $25,000,000-a-year drug therapy program, spoke to newsmen at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to report on current research.

He said that the drug therapy has not worked well against the "slow-growing" tumors that are found in other cancers, such as the ones that attack the breast, lungs, colon, prostate and kidneys.

These tumors take weeks and months to double in number. Lung cancer in particular is a large and growing problem, causing one-sixth of all cancer deaths in the nation. Now, Zubrod announced, scientists believe they have the prescription that will work against the slow-growing tumors.

"We think we know what to do and we think it will be successful," he said.

The new attack is based on the discovery of the reasons why the drugs work against the fast-growing tumors, but not the slow-growing ones.

"Every child with acute leukemia can be put into complete remission with combinations of drugs," he said. Combinations of drugs also have caused the remission of Hodgkin's Disease for more than 18 months in a study that is still under way, he said.

Other cancers in which drugs have brought complete remissions are some childhood solid tumors, choricarcinoma (Cancer of the placenta), Burkitt's lymphoma and testicular tumors, Zubrod reported.